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ABSTRACT

The effect on college graduation of selecting a college major before college admission was investigated, the hypothesis being that students who enter college undecided about their major study field are as likely to graduate as those who have already decided upon their major. It was assumed there would be no significant difference in the frequency which these two groups changed their college majors or in the frequency of transfer from one college to another. Questionnaires were sent to a sample composed of graduates from an independent secondary school. The test for a significant difference between two independent sample proportions was used to analyze the data. Results provided support for the hypotheses. (Author)

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COLLEGE MAJOR CHOICE AND ITS TIMING

by

Betsy Condron

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Chapter 1.

Introduction

Most United State citizens are aware that our country's economy has been suffering from a variety of problems resulting in high unemployment. Rosenthal (1976) feels that one way this affects post-secondary education is that "employment problems are likely to center on job dissatisfaction rather than high unemployment" (pp. 14-15).

During the past 10 years, both secondary and higher education have been caught up in what is called career education by its proponents and career mania by its opponents. Most persons agree that Sydney Marland, United States Commissioner of Education, conceived and introduced career education, "indeed a popular topic. Virtually everywhere the concept is of concern to persons of the educational community" (Cormany, 1972, p. 1).

Hechinger (1976) reviewed the history of career education, cited its strong and weak points, and defined it as the newest fad. Caroline Bird's best-seller, The Case Against College, argues convincingly for increased awareness of job opportunities. Bird mentions that there have always been students who enter college with strong career directions, but she pinpoints 1973 as the year "career commitment emerged with explosive suddenness, as the new look on campus" (1975, p. 91).

Elbert Ockerman, the University of Kentucky's Admissions Dean, suggests that many educational efforts seem to be

cyclical and that we are currently full tilt into the Careers Cycle (Ockerman, 1976). The College Board Review (Fall 1977) features a half dozen writings advocating more career education. A new magazine, Emphasis, highlights career education in each edition. Countless pamphlets and advertisements starring this theme are regularly sent to school counselors. Ockerman further cautions counselors to take a good look at the "undecideds" entering college and at the shifts in their educational goals.

Notwithstanding the increased pace of career oriented education, there are indications that the current cycle has reached a climax and is leveling off. Educators who espouse the soundness of a liberal arts education and revolt against the emphasis being placed on too early decision-making, create a forceful backlash movement. They insist that career education include the liberal arts as a choice road to career fulfillment.

> Careerism and preprofessionalism, sizzle words in the world of academe for the past several years, appear to be losing their sizzle. . . . All of this is part and parcel of the intense debate over the respective roles of the liberal arts and vocational or professional training to provide marketable skills for college graduates. ("Careerism Drive Slows," 1976, p. 1)

Similar spokesmen believe in good planning with regard to educational choice, but are concerned that the need to focus early on one's career may be overemphasized at the expense of personal growth and satisfaction. Joseph Monte, a high school counselor, expresses his concern in the June 1977 Pacer, a Pennsylvania newsletter for counselors. He

worries that such early choice emphasis could fracture us into a social structure wherein each type of worker would be identified so early in his education that students would become frozen into their life tracks. Monte feels this utilitarian push intrinsically denies the value of education for its own sake. The Admissions Dean at Northwestern University clarifies:

> Another deletorious effect of deciding early on one's career is to limit course selection and, thus, exposure to other possible careers. If better career planning means encouraging young people to consider more options, I am an enthusiastic supporter. However, if the result is to focus earlier in one's life on a specific career, the likelihood is more boredom and frustration than currently exists. . . . I think we would agree that there is a considerable difference between developing skills for a particular profession and becoming a well-educated person. (Ihlanfeldt, 1974, p. 1)

The Setting for the Problem

At the coeducational, independent college preparatory school for day and boarding students where this research took place, the conflicts and pressures described above are felt in direct relationship to the millions of words spawned by the current educational debate. As college counselor for this school, the researcher faces problems both philosophical and practical in nature. The school is committed to a liberal arts secondary education for its students and, in spite of the recent career furor, believes such a broad course of study is the best college education for most of its students.

However, faced with a rather job-oriented generation and parents who are concerned that their offspring may be

unable to find employment commensurate to expensive, time-consuming education, the high school advisor needs as much information relative to career counseling as possible.

The issue is compounded because many colleges now urge or insist the student choose his major at the time of application. Therefore, the counselor must be able to give advice in not only general career fields, but also the more specific courses of study relevant to that career, with fringe knowledge of how that college major might relate to future happiness and self-fulfillment. A counselor working in the environment of the school described above, should also be able to ease the minds of those students (and their parents) who have no career direction in mind.

In 1974 a Dartmouth College sophomore, Gerald N. Rosenberg, reported in The New York Times (January 16, p. 91) the fear he and his peers felt during high school when faced with making a lifetime career decision. They did not want to be trapped. They wanted to sample a variety of career fields before making a commitment. Caroline Bird voices the same concern when she asks how young people find out what kind of work they want to do. "For some the light dawned in the classroom in a conversation with a professor or a friend" (1975, p. 52), but she points out that it is just as apt to happen somewhere else.

> The choice of a career involves far more than a choice of how to earn a livelihood. The question "What shall I do?" really means "What shall I do with myself?" and that means asking "Who am I?" "What do I want to be?" "What values do I want to serve?" "To whom and to what do I want to be responsible?" (Silberman, 1970, p. 23)

As the May 1973 Christopher News Notes (Number 200) reminds us: "The issue is not simply how you will make a living; it is also how you will make a life."

The Problem

The problem this study sought to resolve was the counselors' need for additional data about secondary school students' college major choices. Its purpose was to research the general area of college and career guidance in secondary school, in particular, differences between students who entered college with a definite major and those who were undecided.

There were three subproblems: Does the college freshman who is committed to a major (decided) change his career decision less often than the freshman who is not committed to a major (undecided)? Does the decided student transfer less often than the undecided student? Is the decided student more likely to complete his bachelor's degree than the undecided student?

Germane to this discussion of the problem, subproblems and purpose of the study is a survey completed at Illinois State University. It examined the way 300 freshmen chose their colleges and careers. It discovered the need for more

effective counseling by counselors who "must struggle along with insufficient data which guides our youth to unsuitable and maladjusted status as college students" (Venerable, 1974, p. 9).

Reasons for the areas of concern prompting the present study appear in guidebooks, articles and headlines which may give the counselor anxiety over his ability to meet such needs. A representation follows:

> Slim Pickings for the Class of '76. (Time, 1976, p. 46)
>
> Most high school students have only a vague notion of what they'd like to do for their life's work. (Facing Facts, 1971, p. 14)
>
> How can one narrow his interests to focus on one course of study or major? And how can he decide what to do as a result of his education? (Brown, 1972, p. 18)
>
> Shrinking Job Market Forecast for College Graduates In '70's. (The New York Times, 1971, p. 3)
>
> The percentage undecided about what field to major in has increased each year since 1971. (Higher Education and National Affairs, 1974, p. 3)

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used in the report and may need further clarification.

Decided refers to the student who enters college sure of his choice of major.

Undecided refers to the student who enters college unsure of his choice of major.

College major refers to a course of study in which a student may concentrate. By frequent association the term also implies a possible career area.

Career education and career counseling refer to guidance in the choice of college majors with their subsequent career possibilities.

Chapter II.

Review of the Literature

> As the United States enters its third century and puts behind it the Bicentennial celebrations in which it has recently engaged, many of its pre-occupations with the past continue. . . . Career education is a movement with a past. (Herr, 1977, p. 7)

Edwin Herr, quoted here, has tried to ease the concern of educators who worry whether training of the mind or of the body is the more important task. By tracing the country's history of facing this dilemma, he demonstrates that the debate is not new. Career education has simply assumed a contemporary look. Herr questions whether emphasis on establishing career goals too early in life is harmful to the individual and to society.

Another writer, Homer Gammons, raises the same questions in Common Sense In Guidance, with particular reference to the counselor's role. He mentions the general and naive belief that a counselor can give a few tests and somehow come up with a career choice which will be just right for a student. It does not surprise Gammons that most teenagers have doubts about their ultimate adult roles. They have little knowledge of the work world and lack the mature insight necessary for self-evaluation. He feels that the final career decision should be delayed as long as possible: "One of the reasons for going to college . . . is to discover more about life, society and self. . . . One of the hoped-for results . . . is that it will make possible the judgments necessary for career planning" (1969, p. 133).

Centre College of Kentucky is just one of the growing number of liberal arts colleges which warn future students about choosing majors too early. Its educators, using data from Twenty Myths, caution that the importance of the major is one of the most over-rated things about college. They feel this choice should be resisted until the junior year because most 18-year olds know so little about themselves or the broad world in which they live. Centre gives statistics about the majority of students who change majors once or twice, pointing to most adults who are not doing anything remotely connected with their college majors (Pope, 1975, p. 4).

Syracuse University's newsletter, The Orange Express, reports that about 40% of a typical freshman class is unsure of a career (Winter 1976, p. 2). A recent national poll detailed in another Syracuse publication showed that 35% of college students will switch their majors while in college (Cummings, 1975, p. 1). Syracuse's Admissions Director admonishes us not to feel nervous about the undecided student. He echoes Gammons by reminding us that a reason for going to college is to find out what's available and to try out a variety of things for informed future decision-making.

Faculty members often agree with the admissions persons quoted herein. The Chairman of Agnes Scott College's English Department advises that students should allow themselves "the privilege of breadth in learning. . . . It would be more

desirable if education were viewed as a resource, not a restriction" (Brown, 1972, p. 18).

Commenting on college graduates who are over-educated for the job market available to them, a Harvard expert worries about how to challenge these young people. He feels the problem results from our country's success in giving higher education to so many, a problem no one has ever faced before. One out of eight workers had a college degree in 1970, but by the end of this decade there will be one degree holder of every four who enter the labour force. This means that many college educated persons will be holding jobs not needing such advanced learning and "unless people can find. . . some other way to fulfill themselves, their feelings of alienation could be disastrous for them and for the nation" (Otten, 1974, p. 8). Educators were warned to de-emphasize the vocational job-preparing facets of schooling and instead to give our youth the thinking skills to compensate for less demanding career roles and better use of their increased leisure time.

The problem of possible student alienation growing within the educational system and the allied concern of increased worker alienation in the work system was explored in a 1974 College Board study. The results pointed to a need for some effective linking between the worlds of education and work (Hechinger, 1976, p. 13).

Another study of more than one-million persons in the early 1970's showed that about 42% were working in a career

not directly related to their major study field. About half of those worked in areas somewhat related and the other half held jobs unrelated to their studies. "To expect a freshman to see clearly the next state, four to six years later. . . when he will have to link his college major to his career. . . seems too much to ask of a typical 18 year old" (Bienstock, 1973, p. 56).

Venerable is dismayed that thousands of freshmen choose courses selected by their parents, contrary to their own preferences. He sees this as a source of future dissatisfaction and gives timely advice to the majority of able students who enter college and do not know what they want to do or be, urging that: "such decisions not be forced and not be hurried" (1974, p. 9).

Rationale

Research based upon the timing of a student's choice of college major needs to be focalized carefully in order that its full impact may be appreciated. The cited literature touches on the career education explosion of the late sixties, the resultant rise in career emphasis within our schools, and some of its thrusts. The items from journals, college brochures, newspapers and magazine columns have attempted to show how this trend may affect our youth who enter college. Most authors reviewed agree that career education can be decidedly helpful, but if over emphasized it can be disastrous. As Jesser wrote in The College Board Review: "Career education is a concept that needs to be fused into the educational process in all

subject areas . . . a broad concept, not a narrow program or technique" (1978, p. 13).

The role of the secondary school counselor, especially as he works with teen-agers in college major decision-making, is of prime interest here. In comparing groups of students committed to a career direction upon entering college, to those who were indefinite about their future goals, the researcher chose three areas which might pinpoint satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their college major choices.

Hypotheses

Based on professional reading, a sampling of which is cited herein, and the researcher's 10 year experience as a college counselor at the secondary school level, the study developed with three specific hypotheses.

> It is important that education no longer be sold mainly as an economic investment. Higher education is not a panacea which can redress every social and economic inequity. (Garcia and Garcia, 1978, p. 24)

> The liberal arts involve training for nothing, but preparation for anything. . . . A liberal arts graduate <u>can</u> have an even chance for a good job after graduation. (Woodward, 1976, p. 16)

If the above quotations are valid, both having to do with higher education as a necessity to a better society, then it behooves counselors to encourage students to attend college for the right reasons, not as a career end in itself.

Among the findings of the College Placement Council's study of the relationship between college education and job satisfaction are these points of interest.

> Working at a job related to a college major is not essential for job satisfaction. . . . There is no advantage in choosing and preparing for a career field at an early stage. Late choosers are equally as satisfied with their eventual employment as early choosers. Therefore, college students should be flexible and adventurous in selecting courses rather than choosing them narrowly with a specialized career in mind. ("College Education," 1977, p. 2)

This seems the core of the career debate and points to:

> $H^{1.}$ Freshmen who enter college as undecideds are as likely to complete their bachelor's degrees as those who enter college with a definite choice of major.

Wertz and Wetley studied the reasons students change their career plans during college. Forty-four percent of their subjects had made a major field transfer during college which led the researchers to determine: "the issue of a student's selection of his educational experience, whether it be a personally appropriate institution or a personally fulfilling career specialization, deserves increased study" (1968, p. 401).

Kojaker's research reports that generally one-third to one-half of university undergraduates change from one major field to another. "The initial decisions young people make about their educational plans are often tentative and subject to change" (1971, p. 48). An additional point in the abstract of a goal orientation study by Appel and Witzke is that freshmen enter college at "varying degrees of maturity and some are, therefore, more certain of their career plans than others" (Appel, 1972).

Facets of counseling to which the secondary school counselor should be especially sensitive are found between the lines of news reports. "Experts estimate the average

workers will change careers approximately three to five times in a lifetime" (Pawling, 1972, p. 2). "A significant number of Americans may no longer be choosing one life-long career, favoring instead career hopping" (Guidance Review, 1977, p. 4). Some might read into such statistics the question: If adults change careers in search of satisfaction, why should not college students change majors in the same search? These arguments lead into:

H^2. Freshmen who enter college as undecideds change their major no more frequently than those who enter with a definite choice of major.

By the early 1970's higher education faced a great many more transfer students, encouraged by the ever growing mobility of our citizens. "What little data were available agreed that at least one out of every four entering full-time freshmen would be transferring colleges, and the trend was on the increase" (Buchtel, 1978, p. 21). In 1976 Syracuse's Admissions Director estimated that only one student in three who started college would complete a degree at the institution he or she first entered (Orange Express, Winter 1976, p. 2).

Findikyan and Willingham's research pertinent to this subproblem shows that today's college students seem more transient than their predecessors, "hopping from one horse to another as they do" (1969, p. 4). They feel our increasingly mobile and affluent society will continue to support the country's migration which is a prime cause for the increase in transfers among four year institutions.

This relatively new aspect of college counseling is one more reason why guidance personnel are admonished from all

sides "to be more precise in their guidance for post-high school learning experiences" (Peters, 1970, p. 1). They must heed warnings made in two major educational reports released in 1974, The Carnegie Commission Study and The Newman Report: "The whole educational enterprise is in serious peril of losing its ability to respond creatively to new problems and opportunities that are already on the horizon" (Mathews, 1974, p. 63).

As stated in the 1976 admissions brochure of Florida's New College, "it is quite normal for students entering college to be uncertain of their exact educational plans" ("Fifteen Questions," p. 10). As those plans change so may the desire to remain on one campus for all four years of college. It is proposed that:

H^{3}. Freshmen who enter college as undecideds transfer to another college no more frequently than those who enter with a definite choice of major.

Chapter III.

Methodology

In June of 1978 a questionnaire was sent to graduates of Wyoming Seminary College Preparatory School in Kingston, Pennsylvania. Its purpose was to collect information about this coeducational school's graduates after their bachelor's degrees were completed. In addition to the helpful data such research generates, it is a positive public relations gesture for an independent school to keep in contact with its constituents by way of follow-up surveys, thus assuring them of continued interest in their welfare.

The Classes of '69, '72 and '73 were chosen to receive the questionnaire. Although the researcher was not the counselor for the '69 graduates, many members of the group were familiar with her, and it was hoped the return percentage might be better because of that personal tie-in. (See attached cover letter.) By 1972 the researcher had become the major college counselor at the school. Most of the students from these three classes had graduated from college when they received the questionnaire, and their responses would be helpful to the academic and college counseling departments of Wyoming Seminary.

Within the body of the questionnaire there were specific questions to be used as the basis for this study. In order to avoid as much misunderstanding as possible, the questionnaire was constructed simply, with many questions being of the yes or no variety.

The covering letter was meant to convey to the respondent a sense of objectivity about the research and a feeling of commitment to the future betterment of his alma mater by his return of data valuable in improving the college counseling services offered. It was hoped his sense of responsibility to the enterprise would be emphasized through the mention of possible use in an alumni magazine and as the basis for a thesis. This heightened feeling might increase the percentage of return.

Upon their return the questionnaires (see Appendix) were divided into two groups, those from respondents who had been sure of their major choice upon college entrance (decideds) and those from respondents who were unsure (undecideds). To provide the necessary information the questionnaire's first item was: 1. When I entered college my choice of major was: Definite___; Indefinite___.

Additional questions relevant to each specific hypothesis were distributed non-consecutively through the questionnaire. It was thought that data collected in such a way would be more valuable because the responder might consider his answers in relation to his total secondary school experience, rather than in isolation for the purposes of a particular study.

The next data sought would report college graduation: 7. I completed my bachelor's degree: Yes___; No___. It was necessary to include this item to discover if any difference existed between the two groups regarding their completion of the college degree goal. Hypothesis 1. states that: Freshmen who enter college as undecideds are as likely to

complete their bachelor's degrees as those who enter college with a definite choice of major.

Thirdly, information was needed concerning the frequency of change of college majors: 3. After first formally registering for my major I changed it: Not at all___; Once___; More than once___. The answers to the third item would show whether initial indecision about college major choices affected the number of times the respondents changed their majors. Hypothesis 2. surmises: Freshmen who enter college as undecideds change their major no more frequently than those who enter with a definite choice of major.

And finally, data was collected to learn about the frequency of transfer from one college to another: 6. I transferred from my first college: Yes___; No___. This question's tally would demonstrate whether either group was more likely to transfer to another college. Hypothesis 3. states: Freshmen who enter college as undecideds transfer to another college no more frequently than those who enter with a definite choice of major.

The test for a significant difference between two independent sample proportions (Tate, 1965, p. 258) was used to test the proposed hypotheses. For the purposes of this study, the .05 level of significance was selected as the acceptance level.

Chapter IV.

Analysis and Discussion of Data

Of the 320 questionnaires sent out, 179 were returned and usable, a 56% response. It was found that 102 (57%) of the respondents were decideds and 77 (43%) were undecideds. There was no significant difference in the two groups with regard to their college degree completion, the frequency of their changing majors or the frequency of their transferring from one college campus to another.

The data represent an excellent response for educational surveys of this type and are indicative, perhaps, of the manner in which the questionnaires were presented. (See Chapter III.)

The researcher is aware that the validity of all data collected is subject to some question. Seeking facts from persons who must look back over a period of years to report accurate impressions, has vulnerable points. In addition, to ask questions of one's former students is a risky venture. Some participants will give biased answers and others will try to give lengthy explanations which may have strong personal pro or con feelings about the researcher and the school she represents, thus lending increased bias.

Nevertheless, the data collected represent a base from which to start this study and are presented in the following tables.

Table I. Respondents who completed bachelor's degrees and were sure of their major choice upon college entrance (Decideds) or were unsure (Undecideds).

	N.	THOSE COMPLETING DEGREES		z-Ratio
		No.	%	
Decideds	102	92	90.20	0.927
Undecideds	77	66	85.71	

Table II. Respondents who changed their majors and were sure of their major choice upon college entrance (Decideds) or were unsure (Undecideds).

	N.	THOSE CHANGING MAJORS		z-Ratio
		No.	%	
Decideds	102	40	39.22	0.316
Undecideds	77	32	41.56	

Table III. Respondents who transferred from one college to another and were sure of their major choice upon college entrance (Decideds) or were unsure (Undecideds).

	N.	THOSE TRANSFERRING COLLEGES		z-Ratio
		No.	%	
Decideds	102	19	18.63	0.770
Undecideds	77	18	23.34	

The data presented in Table I. demonstrate that a fraction over 90% of the graduates who were decided about their college major choice and almost 86% of the undecideds completed their bachelor's degrees. The statistical test showed there was not a significant difference between the groups. Whether or not a student entering college was sure of the major he wished to pursue did not seem to affect the chances of his ultimately attaining his degree.

Table II. presents data concerning the frequency of change of their college majors, by the respondents. Approximately 39% of the decideds and 41½% of the undecideds switched majors. The statistical analysis showed no significant difference between the decideds and undecideds which justifies acceptance of the second hypothesis.

Data in Table III. depict that close to 19% of the decideds and about 23% of the undecideds made a transfer from one college campus to another. The statistical analysis showed no significant difference between these two groups, pointing to the validity of the third hypothesis. We may assume that early college major choice had no effect on whether or not the undergraduate student would transfer colleges.

Results of this analysis confirm the researcher's expectations that early choice of a college major is not necessary in order to assure graduation. Neither does an early choice effect whether students change their college majors nor whether they remain at the college where they began pursuit of their degree.

Chapter V.

Summary and Implications

This study looked at one particular aspect of the college counseling which is offered in many secondary schools today. With the increased emphasis, nationally, on career education it was supposed that some students were being pressured into making college major (career) choices earlier than might be best for them. The study hoped to prove that students, unable or unwilling to make such a choice upon college entrance, might have as much chance for stability in certain areas of their college years as the students who were decided about their major curriculum before going to college.

The findings of this research support that position and hold enough weight for secondary school and college counselors to use if they wish to fight the battle of career mania described earlier. Counselors armed with this data might feel fewer qualms in cautioning students and their families to slow their college major decision-making, to let time and experience work a little longer before diving in head first, eyes shut and ears covered, to a curricular path which was chosen more out of panic than mature career planning.

For if a counselor may be guided by figures that show no significant difference between graduates who completed their bachelor's degrees having entered college as decideds or undecideds; if one may point to the negligible difference between these two groups in the frequency of their changing college majors; and if one is able to say the same about the

miniscule difference in their rate of college transfer -- then college guidance has more ammunition to demand the careful research and thought necessary at this juncture in a young person's life.

The implications of this study may be valuable to the students who heed this advice and <u>will</u> go to college:

> It helps you become a better citizen, a better parent, and to have a richer life. . . . Remember, life offers you no certainty. The best you can do is to place the most important bets of your life, especially those concerning your education, on those options that seem to hold chances for the greatest rewards. (Wright, 1976, p. 5)

Counselors using these statistics could add them to the body of recommendations coming from educational sources. Lehigh University assures its incoming freshmen that most of them don't know what they will end up doing and will change jobs during their lifetimes. "If you can't decide what your thing is, don't worry" ("What About College?" 1977, p. 3). Studies to back up that statement are cited in the June 1978 <u>College Board News</u>; they show that "at least 36% of Americans between 16 and 65 are now undergoing or anticipating job or career changes" ("Education Identified," p. 1). And Penn State research shows 72% of a college graduate group found employment in occupations identified as remote from their college majors (Carter, 1977, p. 3).

If, then, so many of our young people change their careers as they get older, it might be more productive for them and for society as a whole if their college education prepared them for the trauma of the change, not the career

itself. A business magnate was quoted recently in The National ACAC Journal: "It's much cheaper to hire someone who can think than it is to hire someone who can do" (Munschauer, 1973, p. 4).

If we agree that a career is "not just one decision, it is a process over many years" (Patterson, 1978, p. 4), then we should put less importance on which particular path our youngsters choose to travel en route to their careers. Professor Heath of Haverford College states that "maturity and competence in later life" seem to be correlated with one's non-academic facets such as character development, empathetic skills and moral values. (Fiske, 1977, p. 3) It is those aspects of college education which might hold more worth for our students than whether they major in marine biology or criminal justice.

The President of the University of Chicago, Hanna Gray, in answering a question about the best advice to give high school students entering higher education, remarked that they must not expect miracles from what colleges are going to do for them.

> Students should open themselves up a little bit to the complexities of learning and realize that it often means becoming a little unravelled before you can put things back together, but that in this process, a sense of excitement, possibility and choices take hold. ("Hanna Holborn Gray," 1978, p. 5)

Perhaps it is easier to become unravelled if you are an undecided freshman and perhaps, in the long run, the ensuing sense of excitement, possibility and ultimate choice will produce a sounder citizen than one who was pushed too early

into a career choice. "The current rush to career education can easily be seen as an effort to move the young into established society without the experience of a serious reexamination" (Botstein, 1976, p. 2). In the opinion of this researcher and her supportive resources, such a trend is decidedly unhealthy. Additional studies of this sort may help to counteract such a movement. Further follow-up on high school graduates' post college careers and the relevancy of their jobs to their college majors should add needed information for counselors. Results of such research should be publicized in educational journals and the news media so that the information collected would be more generally available for use by other school counselors.

At this point in time, removed from the initial stages of this research by several years, it is interesting to note in educational news releases, a swing away from the strong push towards early career selection so evident in the early part of this decade. Within its limits, this study verifies the hypotheses stated earlier. As more and more college graduates need to prepare for a lifetime of career changes, the later one can choose his college major the better prepared he may be for such a future.

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Appendices

Wyoming Seminary
Kingston, Pennsylvania 18704

May 28, 1978

Dear Seminary Graduate,

I am conducting a survey of 3 separate classes of Wyoming Seminary Alumni in order to garner information for my Masters Degree Thesis: A comparison of high school students who entered college with a declared major and those who were "undecided". As Wyoming Seminary's College Placement Director, I am deeply interested in this topic and how it has affected the career choices of our students. Some other concerns I have about the career decision-making process and my role in it, will be apparent to you as you read over the enclosed questionnaire.

I hope you'll do me (and Seminary) a big favor, by taking the time (3-5 minutes only) to complete these questions and return the form by August 1st. We plan to print a summary of these results in the alumni magazine, so you'll be able to judge how others answered the questions, but that won't be possible (and neither will my thesis!) if I don't have a healthy response.

Thesis or no Thesis...a good survey response will be of major interest to other professional counselors and to the school as a whole...parents, teachers, trustees, students. Hearing from you, the "products" of our education, helps keep us on our toes and hopefully adds to the flexibility and creativity of our programs.

Since I know all of you in the Classes of '72 and '73, and most of you from '69 (my daughter Sally Parkhurst's class)...I'm hoping you'll favor me with a grand return percentage!? And thank you in advance, for helping out in this venture.

Cordially,

Betsy Condron

Betsy Bell Parkhurst Condron
Director of College Placement

BBPC:sc
Encl.

COLLEGE SURVEY FOR WYOMING SEMINARY - Class___: Boarder___ Day___
P.G.?___: Female___ Male___

Please check most appropriate answer:

1. When I entered college my choice of major was:
Definite__; Indefinite__.

2. In order of importance (1, 2 and 3, #1-most important)...my college major decision making was influenced by: Parents__; Teachers__; Seminary counselors__; College personnel__; Friends__; Experiences__.

3. After first formally registering for my major I changed it:
Not at all__; Once__; More than once__.

4. One reason I chose my first college was because it had the major I wanted: Yes__; No__.

5. Other reasons were: academic reputation__; low cost__; social life__; religious affiliation__; live away from home__; athletics__; family tradition__; size__; location__; other__...explain _____.

6. I transferred from my first college: Yes__; No__. (If "yes") - This was because of the majors offered: Primarily__; Partially__; Not at all__.

7. I completed my Bachelor's Degree: Yes__; No__; In progress__.

8. (If "yes") - This was done at my: 1st college__; 2nd college__; Other__. I found a job related to my undergraduate major: Directly__; Indirectly__; Unrelated__; Am unemployed__; Am still in school__.

9. My final undergraduate major was called _____.

10. I entered graduate school: Yes__; No__. (If "yes") - This was in the general area of my undergraduate college major: Yes__; No__.

11. If I were to begin college all over again, I would change my major: Yes__; No__. I would change my college: Yes__; No__.

12. In relation to my college peers, I was prepared for college study:
Better than__; The same as__; Not as well as__.
My Sem. college counseling was: Excellent__; Good__; Fair__; Poor__.

Please return by August 1st in enclosed, stamped envelope to:
Mrs. Betsy Condron
Wyoming Seminary
Kingston, Pa. 18704

Signed (if you wish) _____